



African Commission on Nuclear Energy

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Statement to the

*64th GENERAL CONFERENCE
OF THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY
Vienna, 21-25 September 2020*

Delivered by

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Executive Secretary of the African Commission on Nuclear Energy*

AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION

Mister President,

The African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE) – African Union Commission Delegation would like to congratulate Your Excellency on your election as the President of the 64th Regular Session of the IAEA General Conference. We assure you of the AFCONE and the African Union Commission support and cooperation towards the success of this Conference and the Implementation of its resolutions.

We congratulate His Excellency Ambassador Grossi, the IAEA Director General, for all the efforts developed since his tenure, facing new challenges during these difficult times and, in particular, for his support to Africa in Fighting the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Mister President,

Nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy are firmly embedded in the Pelindaba Treaty. African States are implementing, with the continuous support of the IAEA and Other Development Partners, national and regional programmes on peaceful nuclear applications.

Despite the 2020 Exceptional Situation related to COVID-19, cancelling, and postponing the majority of the planned events, some important activities have been implemented in Africa:

- The African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE) has been mandated by the 3rd AUC Specialised Technical Committee (STC) Ministerial Meeting on Education Science & Technology, held in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) from 10 to 13 December 2019, to develop, with the IAEA and the African Union Partners, a Nuclear Sciences and Technology Research and Development Program that promote the use of nuclear energy for sustainable development in areas such as agriculture, health, infrastructure, mining, security, water, energy, and environment among others; and to carryout capacity building, education and training activities for the safe and secure use of nuclear energy.
- The AFCONE organised, in South Africa, last February 2020, with the kind support of Global Affairs CANADA and in close cooperation with Wilton Park (UK), a Conference between senior African policy and technical experts from governments, regulators, academia, industry and their regional and international partners. The participants identified pathways for expanding and strengthening the contribution of the peaceful applications to support Africa's development goals (Agenda 2063, the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Common African Position (CAP). In addition, they worked to develop a common understanding of regional positions on peaceful uses to inform the Presidency of the 2020 Review Conference to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).



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- The AFCONE, the AFRA Agreement and the FNRBA Forum, convened with the IAEA last February 2020, to formalise their Cooperation Framework, in order to serve in complete synergy the continent: I am pleased to inform you about the Signature, last 07 September 2020, at the AFCONE Premises in Pretoria, of a Collaboration Agreement with AFRA.

- **In the Field of Nuclear Power:** Several African Member States are implementing national nuclear power plants projects and others are preparing/consolidating the national nuclear infrastructure to introduce nuclear power in their energy mix strategy. The AFCONE is preparing in collaboration with the African Union Commission Infrastructure and Energy Department and the IAEA, the reactivation of the **African Network for Enhancing Nuclear Power Programmes (ANENP)** with activities related to the execution of the IAEA milestones approach enabling a sound development process for a nuclear power programme.

- **In Uranium and Mineral Resources:** Africa and Kazakhstan are producing about 34 % of the Uranium Global Resources (20 % and 14 % respectively). The AFCONE organised last 10 September 2020, in close cooperation with the African Union Commission Trade and Industry Department and the International Science and Technology Centre (ISTC/ Nur Sultan/ Kazakhstan), a Meeting on “Uranium in Africa: Exploration, Exploitation and Cooperation Opportunities”, raising the African Mineral Vision (AMV), its Plan of Action and Opportunities of Interregional Cooperation,

- **In Nuclear Safety & Security & Safeguards:** In order to consolidate the Regional Ownership in terms of Capacity Building, Nuclear Safety Analysis and Nuclear Safeguards Services Delivery, the AFCONE is,
 - o Selecting African Collaborating Centres (ARCCs), in these Fields.
 - o Contributing to the Events of the ISTC Project (kindly funded by the EU) on Safety, Security and Safeguards in the SADC Region.
 - o Organising with ESARDA (EU) Joint Activities on Nuclear Safeguards

- **In Health,** AFCONE, is preparing, in close coordination with the AUC Science & Technology and Social Affairs Departments, the organization in 2020 of a Regional High Level Meeting in “Fighting Cancer in Africa”, involving all the African Countries and the Organisations interested (WHO AFRO, AORTIC, IAEA).

- **International Cooperation with Development Partners:** As part of the African Union Vision, Africa's Strategic Partnership and according to the AFCONE mandate related to the International Alliances, We are pleased to announce the Signature this Week of two Cooperation Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) with the Global Cooperation Nuclear Energy Partnership (GCNEP/ Department of Atomic Energy (India)) and the State Atomic Energy Corporation (ROSATOM/ Russia), strengthening the development of Capacity Building and Safe and Secure Implementation of Peaceful uses of Nuclear Energy in Africa.

Mister President,

According to the spirit and the letter of the African Union Agenda 2063, which represents for the African Commission on Nuclear Energy, the main long term reference for its Strategic Plans, a particular consideration is accorded to the Youth and Women in Nuclear, through close collaboration with the regional organisations already in place (African Young Generation in Africa and Women in Nuclear Africa).

- The AFCONE contributed to the AYGN October 2019 Conference and to the September 2020 WIN Africa General Assembly.
- Regional Meetings, raising the Impact Contribution of the two organisations will be implemented before the end of the Year.

Mister President,

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the entry into force of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the 25th anniversary of its indefinite extension. We re-affirm from this tribune, the central role of nuclear-weapon-free zones in the consolidation of the NPT, as well as in their contributions to addressing nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation across all regions of the world.

Committed to implement the conclusions and recommendations of the UNODA-Kazakhstan Seminar organised in August 2019 at Nur Sultan and in Order to develop the Interregional Cooperation Programmes, including in Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy,

- The AFCONE is pleased to announce the signature, in October-November 2020 of a Cooperation MoU with the Central Asian NWFZ.
- The 2nd Cooperation Agreement is currently under review with OPANAL, representing the Latin American and Caribbean Nuclear Weapon Free Zone.

Mister President,

The Signatories to the Pelindaba Treaty, recognize that the establishment of other NWFZs, especially in the Middle East, would enhance the security of States Parties to the African NWFZ.



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- The AFCONE participated, last July 2020, to the UNODA Workshop on Good Practices and Lessons Learned with Respect to the Existing Nuclear Weapon Free Zones, organised in preparation to the 2nd Session of the Conference on the Establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction, planned in November 2020.
- We reiterate once again our deep concern at the lack of progress towards the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 984 (1995) on the Middle East, which was an integral and essential part of the package of decisions and the basis upon which consensus was reached on the indefinite extension of the NPT.

Mister President,

The African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty is proud, when celebrating this year, the 11th anniversary of the Entry into force of the treaty, to announce its ratification in February 2020 by Capo Verde, as the 42nd State Party.

Those States not yet party to the African NWFZ Treaty are encouraged to complete their ratification or accession procedures as soon as possible.

In Conclusion Mister President,

The specific role of AFCONE-AUC, the IAEA and the CTBTO, as well as the coordination and cooperation between these Organizations, is essential for the full implementation of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Provisions.

I express my sincere thanks to the IAEA for its continuous support to Africa, to the State Parties to the Pelindaba Treaty and to their African Groups based, in particular, in Vienna, Geneva and New York, for their cooperation with the African Commission on Nuclear Energy (AFCONE).

I Thank You Mister President.